

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current
scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Wednesday, February 13, 1935.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "A Children's Dinner for Valentine's Day." Approved by Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

-----ooOoo-----

Today I'm going to read you another letter from our correspondent in Washington, D. C. If you're planning a special dinner for Valentine's day -- with the children in mind -- you may be glad to get a few suggestions from our friend in Washington. I'll read her letter:

"Tomorrow is St. Valentine's Day, all in the morning betime -- as Shakespeare said. However, instead of sending you a valentine, here's a more practical token of my affection -- a dinner menu. I'm celebrating with a children's dinner party," continued our Washington correspondent, "and I thought you might like to hear the details. The dinner is in honor of a little neighbor boy whose birthday is the fourteenth of February. Jimmy has been very kind to me this winter -- inviting me to slide on his sled, and even offering to pull me up steep hills after we've coasted down. So -- Jimmy is to be my guest of honor on Valentine's day, and the other guests are his little sister and two of their young friends.

"Please note that my menu has been approved by the Bureau of Home Economics. You will see three red initials in the corner of the menu sheet -- R.S.C. They stand for Rowena Schmidt Carpenter. She is the child nutrition specialist with the Bureau, and naturally she's interested in the food served at children's parties. A wholesome menu served at a regular meal time is her motto -- and send the children home before they're all tired out. (Incidentally, before the hostess is tired out, too.)

"When you read the menu, you'll see that I have a red and white color scheme -- fading to strawberry and white during dessert. Pink candles will grace the dining table, on a lacy white cloth -- and fluted paper cups will hold nuts and Valentine candies. Place-cards are fastened to the nut cups. And here's what we'll have to eat: Tomato Juice Appetizer; Creamed Chicken on Flaky Boiled Rice; Buttered Beets; Assorted Sandwiches; Strawberry Ice Cream and Valentine Cookies.

"The first course, tomato juice, I'll serve in my prettiest glasses, with two or three tiny crackers on each plate. Next will come the creamed chicken, flaky boiled rice, and buttered beets. To make creamed chicken extra nice for a dinner party, I add half a cup or so of cooked celery, cut in small pieces, to the usual recipe. As for the buttered beets -- you can cut them in heart shapes if you like -- but personally I don't recommend it. Life's too short . . .

"Then it comes to sandwiches and cookies, I have more sentiment, and besides, I have a good sandwich cutter. I'll serve a variety of sandwiches --

some white ones filled with a mixture of raw vegetables, and others made of whole-wheat bread, cut in heart shapes, and spread with butter and red currant jelly. (These are open sandwiches.) I'll arrange them all on lace paper doilies, on two trays I brought home from Japan last year. Jimmy always admires my Oriental trays.

"The dessert will be pink ice cream and sugar cookies. I'll make the cookies on Wednesday, and decorate them extravagantly with pink frosting or pink sugar.

"And now," continues our Washington correspondent, "let me give you a tip. If you have a children's party tomorrow, sure as anything your guests will want to know whether there really was a St. Valentine, and when did he live? So you might as well be prepared to tell them that St. Valentine lived in Rome, nearly seventeen hundred years ago; that he was put in jail, although he was innocent, and that while he was in jail he fell in love with the jailer's daughter. One time he sent her a message, and signed it: 'From Your Valentine.' And that, according to one story, was the first valentine.

"One of the ancient folk-stories connected with the fourteenth of February is that the first eligible person you meet on the morning of St. Valentine's Day will be your future husband -- or wife.

"Have you ever seen any of the old valentines of Civil War days? They were very much decorated and rather expensive. Here's a story of Civil War days that may interest you. A certain Captain Brown sent a beautiful valentine to a certain Mollie Turner. The Captain was not satisfied with the pink angel, the silver chariot, and the golden butterflies on the valentine, so he penned an appropriate verse:

"Art thou dear unto this heart?
Ah, search it well and see,
And from this bosom tear the part
That beats not true to thee."

"Now wouldn't you think," says our Washington correspondent, "that a sentiment like that, from a gallant Captain, would have won the heart of Mollie Turner? But no; Mollie was a Scotch lass, and when she looked at the Captain's valentine, carefully, she could see traces of a price mark. The price was fifty dollars . . . Well, Mollie decided she'd better not marry such a spendthrift. Perhaps she was wise. Fifty dollars will buy a lot of bread and meat and potatoes -- and pay for a few dinner parties besides. Greetings to all," concludes our friend, "and I'll try to write you again by Saturday."

Now maybe I'd better repeat the menu she sent us, for a children's dinner party. Your own children may want to ask a school-mate to dinner tomorrow -- and this is a menu easily prepared; Tomato juice; creamed chicken on flaky boiled rice; buttered beets; assorted sandwiches; milk to drink; strawberry ice cream and Valentine sugar cookies.

I'll be with you again tomorrow.

